

AF tries reducing deployment discrepancies

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WASHINGTON—Today's Air Force is expeditionary, and all Airmen should be prepared to deploy to support military operations worldwide, according to Maj. Gen. Timothy A. Peppe.

The majority of Airmen arriving in an area of responsibility are ready to accomplish their mission. However, nearly 10 percent report for duty with some deviations to the required deployment items. Not all of them are mission-critical, but not having the current training, immunizations or proper uniforms places an unnecessary burden on commanders, said Peppe, special assistant to the chief of staff for air and space expeditionary forces.

"We want to improve those statistics and reduce the burden placed upon gaining commanders in the area of responsibility and ensure that Air Force personnel are ready to work when they step off the plane," he said.

The Air and Space Expeditionary Force concept has been in place for Air Force deployments for more than five years. The requirements for operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have been in place for 18

months and 5 months, respectively, Peppe said. He believes a better job must be done when preparing for deployments.

"We have tremendous Airmen and superb leadership," he said. "I know we can do this better."

Taking responsibility is the key to showing up fully prepared to do the job, Peppe said.

"If you are vulnerable to deploy, you need to be ready to go," Peppe said. "You have to do everything possible to be prepared, whether it be uniforms, immunizations, having your will up to speed or making sure all of your ancillary training is complete. All requirements must be taken into account."

Peppe also said he believes commanders should take a look at their people before they deploy.

"Commanders are responsible for how their people depart the home station for a temporary duty assignment no matter where it is in the world," he said.

"It's up to them to make sure that their people are up to speed and the (area of responsibility-specific checklists) are followed."

Peppe has made sure the Air Force is doing the best job it can informing people about deployment requirements.

"We've had problems in the past because all of our checklists weren't the same," he said. "You could look in three different Air Force instructions and find slightly different checklists."

Because of this, the Air Force vice chief of staff streamlined the checklist and broke down the items into two categories—mission-critical and non-mission-critical, Peppe said.

"We didn't arbitrarily decide what was mission-critical and non-mission-critical," he explained. "The users, Air Force component commands, decided what an individual has to have to be functional when they show up in a given area of responsibility. These inputs were then coordinated through the major commands before being categorized into a checklist."

The vice chief of staff's message, sent to the local personnel readiness units, also lists common discrepancies and serves as the interim deployment

guidance until the instructions can be revised.

"This should help commanders and Airmen focus on those items that they have to have in order to be functional the day they walk off the airplane," he said. "Airmen and commanders can find additional information on area of responsibility-specific requirements from the AEF Center's Web site."

The Web site is restricted for dot-mil users only.

The first Airmen to fall under this new guidance will be those deploying with the Blue AEF.

"We'll be looking to see how we do when those 16,000 people rotate into the different areas of responsibility," Peppe said. "Hopefully this new guidance will help both deploying Airmen and the gaining commanders and eliminate the number of the discrepancies."

Commissary Web site links customers to savings

FORT LEE, Va.—When is the next case lot sale? What time does my commissary open? Where can I get more coupons?

The answers to these and other questions are at www.commissaries.com. Commissary customers will find their one-stop cyber information center is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year—and there is always something new.

"The Web site is there to help them save money," said Rick Brink, Web content editor for the Defense Commissary Agency. "One thing we're often asked is why there aren't Internet coupons on our site. But there are. We may not be able to offer them ourselves, but customers can find links to commercial sites that offer commissary sales information, newsletters and downloadable coupons through the page links."

"If a business sells groceries in

commissaries or has coupons of interest to our customers, all they need to do is provide a gateway page for commissary customers and we'll provide a text link to their Web site," said Brink. "We want to do anything we can to encourage savings above and beyond the 30 percent savings we typically provide commissary shoppers."

"Store pages are the most visited areas of our Web site by far," said Brink. "Customers can find commissary locations, hours, news about store events and other useful information about their commissary. They can even e-mail the store. It's all right there at their fingertips—all they have to do is click."

Another recent addition is a link to the "Commissary Gift Certificates" page, which allows anyone to purchase the certificates as a "gift of groceries" for military families and friends.

Guard kids get feel for military in Camp Falcon

When an active duty military father or mother deploys, their children have a lot of trouble understanding why mom or dad had to leave.

This is accented even more for children of deployed National Guard members. Being away from mom or dad for long times is part of the military life, but something that may be new for Guard families.

Camp Falcon, a five-day residential camp for 10-16 year olds, is operated by Youth Programs, TEAM KIRTLAND and the New Mexico Air National Guard.

Designed to teach children of Guard members about military life, the camp will help them deal with family separations because of deployments or mobilization.

The first residential camp will be July 14-18, with a graduation ceremony and picnic July 18 at Hardin Field.

One of the goals of the camp is to identify each child's level of understanding about military life. A camp curriculum includes models to enhance understanding about military customs and courtesies and deployment processes.

The campers will wear uniforms, experience daily roll calls and accomplish daily tasks.

The N.M. Air National Guard's Family Support team is critical to the overall morale and stability of our forces. Due to the greater number of deployments and mobilizations, family support's involvement has become increasingly significant.

The New Mexico Air National Guard's 150th Fighter Wing currently employs almost 1,000 fulltime and part-time warfighters.

3 more selected for E-6 promotion

DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY

Staff Sgt. Ursula M. French
Staff Sgt. Charles Gabriel
Staff Sgt.
Raymond B. George Jr.



Photo by Lisa Gonzales

It's thumbs up for Defense Travel System testing phase

The Defense Travel System made its debut here July 7. The system will process travel orders for military and DOD civilians. Although still in the testing phase, use of the system is encouraged. To use the system, a Common Access Card and card reader are needed. To obtain a card, make an appointment at <https://afpki.lackland.af.mil/scheduler/kirtland/>. Cutting the ribbon are, left to right, Robert Barnett, Secretary of the Air Force Financial Management; Capt. Juanita

McLaughlin, Defense Travel System Program Management Office; Master Sgt. Mary Brooks, 377th Comptroller Squadron Legal Defense Travel System administrator; Maj. Lisa McColgan, 377th Comptroller Squadron Commander; Alberto Carbo, Northrop Grumman Mission Systems; Tech. Sgt. Scott White, Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command Financial Management and Chris Hoke, 377th Comptroller Squadron Defense Travel System helpdesk trainer.